

Photo Gallery



25 of the World's Most Inspiring Women

For EMBRACING HER UNIQUE BEAUTY As an interior designer, Sheila Bridges, 41, has led a highly visible life, producing spaces for such A-listers as former president Bill Clinton. Then in 2004 her dermatologist diagnosed her with alopecia areata, an autoimmune disease; she lost all her hair in just over a year. Bridges refused to don irritating wigs to hide her condition. "My self-esteem was not wrapped up in my hair," she says. Today she's a passionate advocate, working with the National Alopecia Areata Foundation and organizations like Bold Is Beautiful (boldisbeautiful.com). —w.l.w.

Find out the other 15 World's Most Inspiring Women in the May issue of *Essence*! On newsstands April 18, 2006.

Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

